Augusta Schwebius.

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Much Ado About Nothing

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

BY

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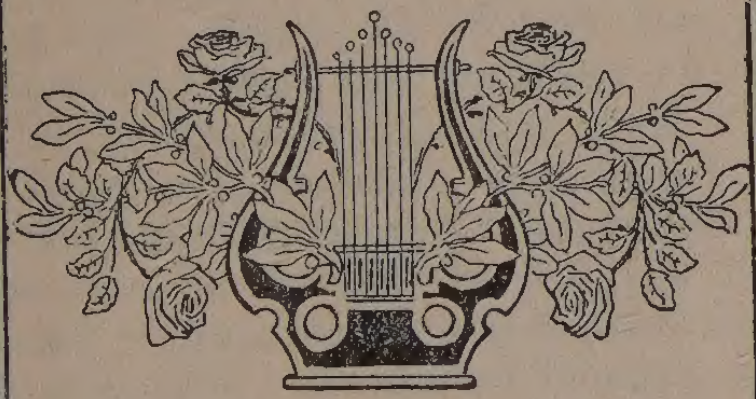

PHILADELPHIA

HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY.

INTRODUCTION.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING was first printed in quarto in the year 1600. In the register of the Stationers' Company on the 23rd of August, together with the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, it was entered to Andrew Wyse and William Aspley, for whom it was printed by Valentine Sims in the same year 1600. Meres's list of 1598 does not include *Much Ado about Nothing*, and the *Henry IV.* included in that list may have been only the First Part. The Second Part of *Henry IV.*, therefore, may have been written between 1598 and 1600, followed within the same period by *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Henry V.* Of *Henry V.* we have internal evidence that it was finished between April and September, 1599. These plays, therefore, evidently lie together in Shakespeare's course of work.

The chief characters in Shakespeare's comedy are Bene dick and Beatrice; but the story of Hero, with which they are interwoven, provides all the action. There is, as we shall find, good reason for this in Shakespeare's conception of the play. The story of Hero is taken, with Shakespeare's variations, from a tale that had been current in literature. Matteo Bandello, born at Castelnuovo in 1480, began his work in life as a Dominican friar, and travelled with an uncle who was general of the order. He retired to France after the battle of Pavia in 1525, when he had been ruined by the foreign conquests in Italy. He was Bishop of Agen from 1550 to 1555, keeping the place warm till a minor came of age, and then retiring in his favour. Bandello

amused himself with the writing of short stories then called novels, and the first collection of them was published in 1554 when his age was seventy-four, and he still held the bishopric. He was a poet, and a good Greek scholar; and he died at the age of eighty-one in 1561. Among his novels was a tale, the twenty-second in his series of two hundred and fourteen, wherein the Signor Scipione Attellano narrates how the Signor Timbreo di Cardona, being with the King Piero (that is Pedro) of Aragon in Messina, fell in love with Fenicia Lionata, and the various and fortunate accidents that happened before he took her for his wife. There is no known translation of this tale; but before 1600 there was in England a great demand for novels translated from the Italian. Bandello himself may have borrowed the ground plan of his tale from Ariosto, whose story of Ariodantes and Geneura, beginning towards the close of the fourth canto of his "Orlando Furioso," extends over the fifth canto and into the beginning of the sixth. That part of the "Orlando Furioso" had been first published in 1515, nearly forty years before Bandello wrote his tale. We may regard, therefore, the story of the fraud practised against Hero as having its origin from Ariosto, in 1515, from whom Spenser adapted it as—in the abused lover—an image of intemperate haste, in the Second Book of his "Faerie Queene," the Book of Temperance. The tale of the Squire who was brought to mischief through Occasion, and made the victim of Furor, begins at the eighteenth stanza of the fourth canto of Spenser's Book of Temperance. Here, as in Ariosto and in Bandello, the deceiver is not a hard-natured Don John, as Shakespeare wisely represents, but a bosom friend who slips into falsehood through a secret rivalry in love. Shakespeare's Hero is Spenser's Claribella, Shakespeare's Margaret is Spenser's Pryene, Don John is "Philemon, false faytour Philemon," and Claudio is Phedon; but Phedon in mad fury slew Claribella, poisoned

Philemon, and was chasing Pryene when Guyon, the knight of Temperance, saved him from Fury. And when he had told his tale

> "Said Guyon, Squire, sore have ye been diseased,
> But all your hurts may soon through Temperance be eased."

Spenser took his tale from Ariosto, but one or two touches in it suggest that he may also have read Bandello, the dates of the several versions being, Ariosto, 1515; Bandello, 1554; Spenser, 1590. At a time when all the polite world of England read Italian tales, it is not unlikely that Shakespeare thought it worth while to pick up as much Italian as would enable him also to read them, but Sir John Harington's translation of Ariosto appeared in 1591, a year after the publication of the first three cantos of the "Faerie Queen." At the close of this volume the reader will find, in the excellent modern version of William Stewart Rose, the tale as told by Ariosto.

Bandello's tale was Ariosto's "Ariodantes and Geneura," translated into an Italian prose romance of daily life, according to the custom of that skilful story-teller. It was Bandello's custom to connect incidents of his stories in a definite way with places and persons, and with actual historical events, which gave them an air of exact record; he was ingenious also in the invention of details that filled in the outline of his story and served well to realise its incidents. It was from Bandello only that Shakespeare could have taken Messina as the scene of his tale, Leonato as the name of Hero's father, and brought in Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon. This particular tale of Bandello's has not come down to us in an old translation, and there is no modern translation of it, but Bandello's stories were familiar in England. The "Tragical Discourses" written out of French and Latin by Geoffrey Fenton, and published in 1567, were praised by his friend George Turbervile (who himself versified "Tragical

Tales"), for helping to bring Bandello home to English readers.

> "Now men of meanest skill what Bandel wrought may view,
> And tell the tale in English well that erst they never knew,
> Discourse of sundry strange and tragical affairs,
> Of loving ladies, hapless haps, their deaths and deadly cares."

The "tragical affair" of Hero is, however, treated as fortunate by Bandello, for its happy ending. Much abridged in my translation, it runs thus:

In the year 1282, the Sicilians, weary of French rule, with unheard-of cruelty, killed in one day at the hour of vespers all the French who were in Isola. Every Sicilian lady who was expected to give birth to the child of a French father was pitilessly slain, whence the sad name of the Sicilian Vespers. When the King Pedro of Aragon learnt this, he came suddenly in arms and seized rule over Isola, which the Pope Nicholas III. had told him was his by right of his wife Constance, daughter of King Manfred. King Charles of Anjou who had rule over Naples came then by sea with a very great force to drive Pedro out of Sicily, and there was a great battle in which King Charles was defeated and taken prisoner. Then, for the better attention to war matters, King Pedro established his queen at Messina, because Messina was opposite to Italy, and there was ready passage thence into Calabria.

Shakespeare omits, as beside his purpose, these definite details; but if we choose to supply them from Bandello, the date of Shakespeare's play is in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and the victory from which King Pedro with Claudio and Benedick are returning is the victory over Charles of Anjou. Having fixed a historical date for his tale, Bandello goes on to his story. King Pedro held at Messina a brilliant court, and in rejoicing for the victory there were jousts and dances. A gentleman high

in King Pedro's favour for his conduct in the war, the Signor Timbreo di Cardona, fell deeply in love with the daughter of Lionato de' Lionati, a gentleman of Messina. Shakespeare makes Lionato Governor of Messina. Bandello represented him as a gentleman of the best ancestry, decayed in fortune, living in a large palace, of which part was left unoccupied. Lionato's daughter, loved by Signor Timbreo, was named Fenicia—rightly so named, it is said in the close, because she was a Phœnix. Shakespeare calls her Hero. Signor Timbreo had received many marks of his king's favour; he had made him Count of Collisano, and given him other possessions, so that he had an income of twelve thousand ducats, besides his pension from the King. Claudio, Shakespeare's Signor Timbreo, also is a Count, much favoured by his Prince.

Signor Timbreo began to pass every day before the house of Fenicia, counting himself happy on the day in which he saw her. He was well dressed and handsome, and she looked on him with pleasure. He sent her letters, but she did not answer them, reserving all her kindness for her future husband. Then he resolved to ask her of her father. He confided his purpose to a gentleman of Messina, from whom Messer Lionato heard with great pleasure the offer of Signor Timbreo, and communicated it to his wife and his daughter Fenicia, to whom also the offer was extremely pleasing. It was soon known throughout Messina that Signor Timbreo di Cardona was to marry Fenicia, daughter of Messer Lionato dé Lionati, who injured nobody and helped others as far as he was able. He had won general goodwill in Messina, and the news of his daughter's match gave pleasure throughout the town.

There was in Messina another young cavalier of noble family, the Signor Girondo Olerio Valenziano, who had shown courage in the war, and lived in splendour at the court. He had infinite ill-will to the new engagement,

because he had himself fallen in love with Fenicia, and thought he should die unless he had her for his wife. When he heard of her engagement before he had himself spoken to her father, he allowed himself to be carried away into the doing of an action shameful not to a gentleman only, but to any man. He had been Signor Timbreo's comrade in the wars, and was bound to him in a brotherly friendship; but of their love one had not spoken to the other. Signor Girondo thought to sow such discord between Signor Timbreo and his beloved that the promise of marriage would be broken; and in that case, when he himself asked her of her father for a wife, he hoped to have her.

Signor Girondo found a light and evil-minded youth of the court fit for his purpose, carefully instructed him, and sent him next morning to Signor Timbreo, who had not yet come abroad, but was walking in the garden of his inn. The youth said that he had come so early to communicate a matter of the highest importance, which he ought not to conceal. He heard yesterday that Timbreo had agreed with Lionato for a marriage with his daughter Fenicia. Let him be careful what he did, and have regard to his honour. "A gentleman, a friend of mine," said the youth, "visits her two or three nights a week, and is going to her this evening. If you give me your word that you will not attack me or my friend, I will place you where you shall see all. My service due to you for many kindnesses obliges me to make this known. It is enough for me that I have done my duty." Signor Timbreo, all amazed, expressed eternal obligations to the youth, and pledged his faith that he would do no violence if taken where he might see all the truth with his own eyes. At last the youth bade him come at three o'clock that night to the ruined part of Messer Lionato's house that was beside the garden, and he should be set to watch. The youth then departed, and went in search of the perfidious Girondo, to whom he

told all that he had arranged with Signor Timbreo. Girondo took then one of his servants whom he had taught what he should do, put on him an honourable dress, and scented him with sweet perfumes. The servant went with the youth who had spoken with Signor Timbreo, followed by another with a ladder on his shoulders.

Who could tell how Signor Timbreo had felt through all this day? The too credulous and unfortunate gentleman, blinded by the veil of jealousy, had eaten little or nothing; and whoever looked in his face would have thought him more dead than alive. Half an hour before his time he was at the appointed place among the ruins, from which he could see all. The night was not dark, but very still. He heard steps approaching. As the three passed him he heard the one who was perfumed as a lover say to him who carried the ladder, "Take care that you place the ladder silently. When we came last, Fenicia said that you put it up with too much noise." These words went like sharp swords to the heart of Signor Timbreo. He was unarmed, and they were armed; but the gnawing of jealousy almost forced him to rush out upon the man whom he believed to be Fenicia's lover. The three went to a window in Lionato's house, planted the ladder noiselessly against a balcony, he who represented the lover mounted, and went inside the house. Timbreo thought all proved. His love for Fenicia changed to hate. He would see her no more, and went back to his inn. The youth saw him depart, and made a sign to the disguised servant, who came down the ladder again. Then they all went to the house of Signor Girondo, who rejoiced at the news they brought him, and considered himself to have already won the fair Fenicia.

Signor Timbreo, who slept but little for the rest of that night, was up betimes, and sent for the citizen of Messina through whom he had asked Lionato for his daughter. He, being fully instructed by Signor Timbreo, went at dinner

time to seek Messer Lionato, whom he found pacing his room while waiting until dinner was ready; and the innocent Fenicia was there also, who, in company with her two younger sisters and her mother, was quilting silk. The citizen, having been kindly received, said, "Messer Lionato, I have a message to you and to your wife and Fenicia, from Signor Timbreo." "You are welcome," he answered, "and what is it? Wife and Fenicia, come and hear with me what Signor Timbreo has to tell us." Then the messenger said, "It is usual that ambassadors should not suffer for repeating what they are bidden to say. I come to you, sent by another, and am infinitely grieved to bring news that will do you injury. The Signor Timbreo di Cardona bids me say to you, Messer Lionato, and to your lady, that you should provide yourselves with another son-in-law, because he does not intend to have you for parents; not because of any fault in you, whom he believes to be loyal and honest, but because he has seen with his own eyes that in Fenicia which he could never have believed. To you, now, Fenicia, he says that the love he bore you ought never to have received such guerdon as you have given him, and that you must provide yourself with another husband, as you are already provided with another lover." When Fenicia heard these and other bitter words she was as dead, and so were, at first, her father and mother; but Lionato, recovering spirit, said to the ambassador, "I always doubted from the time when you first spoke to me of this marriage, that Signor Timbreo would hold to his offer, because I knew well, and know, that I am a poor gentleman, and not his peer. Nevertheless, if he repented of taking a wife, it should have been enough to say that he would not; he ought not to put, as he does, a stain of shame upon my daughter. I know very well that anything is possible, but I know, also, how my daughter has been brought up, and what are her ways of life. The just God shall be judge, and shall, one

day, I hope, make known the truth." The messenger departed, and Lionato remained in the belief that Signor Timbreo had repented of a marriage below his rank. Messer Lionato himself came of one of the oldest and noblest houses in Messina, yet his wealth was but that of a private gentleman, though there was old memory of ancestors, who had broad lands, castles, and wide jurisdiction, lost in the political changes and the civil wars of Isola. As the good father had never seen in his daughter anything dishonest, he thought that his poverty had been despised.

Fenicia, feeling herself to have been most wrongfully accused would rather die than live; she lost all colour, and was carried, looking like a marble statue, to her bed.

Doctors and women-friends came round her bed. The women wept, and she, recovering a little, bade them cease from tears that could not help and only added to her grief.

"What has happened," she said, "has been God's will, and we must be patient. It is not repudiation, but the shame mixed with it that has struck me to the heart. Signor Timbreo might have said that I did not please him for a wife, and all would have been well; but he has put me to eternal shame before all the people of Messina for offence which I not only have not committed, but which has never come into my mind. Every one knows that the Lionati were the oldest family in Isola, being descended, as there is record to show, from a most noble family that was in Rome before the birth of Christ. For their little wealth I could have been repudiated without adding this cruel stain. God knows my innocence and that I speak truth. To His name be glory and worship. Who knows but that He wills my salvation by this means. So high a marriage might have made me proud, despising this person or that, and perhaps I should have had less knowledge of God's goodness towards me. Let God do with me what pleases Him, and bring to me through this my sorrow the salvation of my soul.

And may He open Signor Timbreo's eyes; not that he may marry me, for I am dying, but that all the world some day may know that I am most innocent of that shame imputed to me, which now kills me, innocent as I shall be known at the judgment seat of Christ, to whom I commend the soul that seeks escape to Him out of this earthly prison."

Her grief depriving her of speech she babbled words that could not be understood, crossed her hands over her breast, and lay as dead.

The doctors departed, saying grief had killed her. Sad lamentations came from father, mother, friends. After five or six hours had passed, her burial was arranged for the next day.

The mother, more dead than alive, when the other women were gone, called to herself the wife of a brother of Messer Lionato, and those two alone, desiring no other assistance, caused water to be heated, and shut themselves in the chamber, and having unclothed Fenicia, began to wash her body with warm water. The spirits of Fenicia had been seven hours away, when they began to return to their offices as the cold limbs were washed, and, giving visible signs of life, the maiden opened her eyes. Her mother and aunt almost cried aloud, but put hands on her heart, and felt some movement; then with hot cloths and other remedies they restored her silently, until Fenicia said with a deep sigh, "Ah me, where am I?" "Do you not see," said her mother, "that you are with me and with your aunt? You had fallen into so deep a swoon that we believed you dead. But God be praised that you are living." "Alas!" replied Fenicia, "how much better it would be if I were dead, and escaped from all this trouble!" "Choose life, daughter, since so it pleases God. To all ills there is remedy." Hiding her joy, the mother opened the door a little way to cause Messer Lionato to be called, who came at once. It need not be asked whether he was joyful when he saw his

daughter returned to herself. It was resolved that no one should be told of this recovery, and that Fenicia, fully recovered with delicate food and costly wine, should be entrusted to her aunt who was there present, and taken out of Messina to her uncle's villa. Lionato sent for his brother, who was named Messer Girolamo, who took her on the following night to his house, and kept her there most secretly under his wife's care, with a sister of Fenicia who was thirteen or fourteen years old. Fenicia was sixteen, and the intention was to keep her till the growth and change of two or three more years would make it possible to marry her under another name. On the following day the obsequies of Fenicia were publicly performed by Lionato according to his rank. A coffin supposed to contain her body was placed in the family tomb amidst general lament, and an epitaph was inscribed in sad verse, showing how Fenicia had died praying God to make her innocence at last appear.

After all this Signor Timbreo was in great grief, not knowing what to think. It seemed to him that he ought not to be blamed, because he had seen a man mount the ladder and enter the house. But thinking more over what he had seen, now that his passion had cooled, he said to himself that perhaps the house might have been entered to meet another lady, or for robbery. He then remembered that the house of Messer Lionato was very large and that no one inhabited that part which the man had entered, and that Fenicia, sleeping with her sister in a chamber within that of her father and mother, could not have come through her father's chamber to this side, so that his thoughts were disturbed with conflict and he could not sleep. In like manner Signor Girondo, hearing how Fenicia had died, and knowing himself to have been the cause of the great scandal that killed her, became so desperate with grief of heart that two or three times he was about to stab himself. He could neither eat nor sleep, and on the seventh day from

Fenicia's funeral he felt that he could live no longer without discovering to Signor Timbreo his wicked deed. He went therefore towards the king's court: on his way he met Signor Timbreo returning from Court to his inn, and Girondo then invited Signor Timbreo to come with him to a place close by, to do him a service. He took him to the church in which there was the tomb of the Lionati, and bade the servants wait without. Within the church they were alone; and Signor Girondo, leading Signor Timbreo to the place where the epitaph said that Fenicia lay, and kneeling before it, gave a dagger to his friend, told his crime, and asked death for it at Signor Timbreo's hands; if his abused friend would not, in pity, kill him, he would kill himself. Signor Timbreo, in extreme emotion, began to weep bitterly, and prayed Signor Girondo to rise from his knees and tell him more fully of his love and of his crime. At the same time he threw the dagger far from him. God, without whose will not a leaf stirs on a tree, had permitted this. He had sinned by his credulity; from both of them all joy was gone; but neither of them could by death or vengeance bring Fenicia back. They would restore the fair fame of the innocent girl by public declaration of the truth to her parents, and afterwards to all the people of Messina. Signor Girondo put himself in his friend's hands; they knelt together weeping at the tomb, and then went together to the house of Lionato, where they told the truth to him and offered him all service in their power. Messer Lionato in joy and tenderness embraced them both, and asked only of Signor Timbreo that when he wished to marry he should let him know, and take the wife whom he might offer, if she pleased him. Then the people of Messina learnt the truth, and a post was sent by her father to Fenicia to tell what had occurred; whereat she rejoiced greatly and thanked God for her recovered honour.

A year had passed, during which Fenicia lived undiscovered

in her uncle's house, completed her seventeenth year, and had so grown in person and advanced in beauty, that she would not have been known for the former Fenicia by those who believed Fenicia to be dead. Her sister, named Belfiore, was fifteen, and scarcely less beautiful. Lionato, seeing this, and being one day in company with the two gentlemen, said to Signor Timbreo: "It is now time to remind you of your kind promise to me. I think I have found a wife who will content you, when you see her. If you do not find so much love as there was in Fenicia, I can promise that you will not find less beauty or nobility. You shall see her, and do freely what you think is most for your advantage. On Sunday morning I will come to your inn with some following of kinsmen and friends, and you, with Signor Girondo, shall come with us to a villa some three miles from Messina, where we will hear mass, and afterwards you can see the lady of whom I have spoken."

The invitation was accepted. The two gentlemen were escorted to the villa, where they were received with honour. After the mass, they went into a tapestried dining hall, into which came many fair ladies, among whom were Fenicia and Belfiore, Fenicia shining among the beauties as the moon among the stars. Messer Lionato took Signor Timbreo by the hand, and introduced him to Fenicia, called always in that house Lucilla, as the bride he had chosen for him, if he pleased to have her. "I would accept from you," he said, "not only this lady who looks so royal, but any other whom you might have chosen." The lady declared herself ready to do all that Messer Lionato promised for her. At the first sight of her, when she entered the chamber, Signor Timbreo had felt his heart strangely drawn to her as it had been drawn to Fenicia. Then they sat at table, the bride at the head, Signor Timbreo at her right hand, with Belfiore opposite to him, at whose right hand was the Cavalier Girondo. After dinner, Fenicia's aunt

playfully said, "Signor Bridegroom, have you ever before taken a wife?" Then, Signor Timbreo, moved to tears, told his sad story, and Girondo joined in the tale with deep emotion. Other questioning made clear the depth of his affection, and the happy father then made known to him that he was marrying Fenicia; and as he had married her under the false name of Lucilla, he married her again as Fenicia, his friend Girondo presenting the ring, in the same ceremony, to the most fair Belfiore.

When King Pedro heard of these things, he caused the marriage to be celebrated with brilliant festival at Court, honoured the two friends, enriched Lionato, and himself gave a noble dowry to Fenicia.

In Shakespeare's treatment of the old story of Ariosto's thus adapted by Bandello—which is itself a tale of Much Ado about a supposition that was Nothing—though the old tale, skilfully adapted, is the story of the play, yet it becomes wholly subordinate to the scenes showing the loves of Benedick and Beatrice, whose wit combats are also, from Shakespeare's point of view, Much Ado about Nothing. With all their wit they are as far removed from the real duties of life as the unreasoning deliverances of Dogberry and Verges, and they also make Much Ado about Nothing.

In one of his earliest plays, *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare had represented a king of Navarre and many kindly lords of his court putting aside the work of life for banquet of the mind. Biron is the wittiest of them, but when it comes to choosing of wives his Rosalind says to him:—

"Oft have I heard of you, my lord Biron,
Before I saw you: and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit:
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain;

> And therewithal to win me, if you please,
> You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
> Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
> With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
> With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,
> To enforce the pained impotent to smile."

In *Much Ado about Nothing* the playful idleness of mockery in Benedick and Beatrice is changed to noble earnest by contact with the real sorrows of life. The soul of the whole play speaks clearly in the scene between Benedick and Beatrice after the great wrong that has been done to Hero.

Benedick is no mere jester, though he has a buoyant spirit and a ready wit that finds delight in kindly mockery. He is a man of noble temper and proved courage in the field. In Beatrice, too, there is a high, noble spirit, full of strength and tenderness, but she also is gifted with a ready wit that finds delight in kindly mockery. Many a love between man and woman, ending in life-long alliance for the noblest work, may have begun with wit-combats like those of Benedick and Beatrice. But such love could not rest on the much ado about nothing of the pleasant raillery. Its foundation was a common interest in the realities of life. Unloving mockery Shakespeare gives only to the men who are like devils in mood, Richard III. and Iago. Here we have loving mockery expressed in form of the most genial comedy. It is evident from the first that Benedick has spacious lodging in the mind of Beatrice. In the first scene, when the messenger brings news of victory and the return of Don Pedro and his soldiers to Messina, Beatrice, with merry gibe, asks only whether Benedick is coming back. When he returns with his companions, she takes possession of him. Neither yet knows the deeper interest that underlies their readiness to pelt each other with small flowers of rhetoric, and keep up a lively strain of mockery that has no note of malice in it.

The summer sport with its garden scenes, is dated at the outset in July.

"*Claudio.* —from my house—if I had it—
Benedick. The sixth of July: your loving friend, Benedick."

The base trick against Hero Shakespeare does not allow to be, as in the original tale, the act of a gentleman who loves her. He transfers this infamy to a man whose whole mind jars against the right music of life, and who, as brother to Don Pedro, against whom also he had plotted, is linked naturally to the story. By this change the poet also lightens the serious part of the tale of a load that would have dragged heavily at the robes of comedy.

The tricks upon Benedick and Beatrice, by which they are brought together, do not cause them to love, but open to their generous minds a knowledge of themselves, which had lain buried under a too-persistent playfulness that was at odds with serious speech, and gave no matter for earnest thought. The suggestion to each that there was love in the other had more truth in it than the suggesters knew. Through belief of that suggestion, the bar of idle talk—the Much Ado about Nothing—broke down. Observe how the high spirit of Hero answers to the words she hears when hidden in the arbour:

"What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on: I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly."

There is a delightful escape from that part of the old tale which would have been most unfit for a comedy, by

transferring the discovery of the plot against Hero from a repentant lover or confession by Don John, to the worthy watchmen under Dogberry and Verges, who transform what would have been tearful dole into the brightest comedy. It is comedy also in perfect accord with what may be considered as the point of view from which the play has been constructed. Dogberry and Verges exercise wonderfully the little wit they have, but in the scene of the hearing of Conrade and Borachio it may be observed that while Dogberry is the man of empty words, the Sexton, who says little, does all the real business of the examination.

In the opening scene of the Fourth Act—within a public church, if we are so to interpret some suggestions in preceding scenes, although the scene itself rather suggests a chapel in the house of Leonato—the loving care of Beatrice for Hero, her unbroken faith, "Oh, on my soul, my cousin is belied," her womanly resentment of the cruel insult that has struck her cousin down, bring her when all others have left, face to face with Benedick in an hour of human suffering and trial. The direct speech between them is now heart to heart; frank admission of the love between them with a very little touch of the old playful attitude towards each other, from which all mocking is gone; but out of it flashes her noble, passionate resentment of the wrong done to her cousin. Their dialogue is of few words, every word to the point; and its climax with the cry of Beatrice, "Kill Claudio!" It is a noble scene; and if ever the part of Benedick be here so acted as to produce laughter, let the actor wear sackcloth and ashes, and re-study his part.

In the first scene of the Fifth Act, when Benedick comes to challenge Claudio, Shakespeare represents him firm and of few words, which are contrasted with a pelting of small jests at him by Claudio and Don Pedro. The play of wit about him is used now as foil to his own manly simplicity,

and when Benedick has left them, Don Pedro says, He is in earnest."

"*Claudio.* In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D. Pedro. And hath challenged thee?

Claudio. Most sincerely.

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit.

Claudio. He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man."

What Thomas Carlyle called the "apes of the Dead Sea" undertake to cure him. They dwell by the living waters, they are our giants, who can speak plain words of truth and join them to true deeds. H. M.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON PEDRO, *Prince of Aragon.*
DON JOHN, *his bastard Brother.*
CLAUDIO, *a young Lord of Florence.*
BENEDICK, *a young Lord of Padua.*
LEONATO, *Governor of Messina.*
ANTONIO, *his Brother.*
BALTHAZAR, *Attendant on Don Pedro.*
BORACHIO, CONRADE, *Followers of John.*
DOGBERRY, VERGES, *Two Officers.*
FRIAR FRANCIS.
A Sexton.
A Boy.
HERO, *Daughter to Leonato.*
BEATRICE, *Niece to Leonato.*
MARGARET, URSULA, *Gentlewomen attending on Hero.*
Messengers, Watchmen, and Attendants.

SCENE—MESSINA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Before LEONATO'S House.

Enter LEONATO, *Governor of Messina,* INNOGEN *his wife,* HERO *his daughter, and* BEATRICE *his niece, with a Messenger.*

Leon. I learn in this letter, that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this: he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion: he hath, indeed, better bettered expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much, that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness: there are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

Beat. I pray you, is Signior Montanto returned from the wars or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady: there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he's returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina, and challenged Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the birdbolt.—I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady. But what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet, but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one; so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.—Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is't possible?

Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there

no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approached.

Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR, *and Don* JOHN.

D. Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly.—I think, this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

D. Pedro. You have it full, Benedick; we may guess by this what you are, being a man.—Truly, the lady fathers herself.—Be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turncoat.—But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind; so some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 't were such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would, my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way o' God's name, I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

D. Pedro. This is the sum of all: Leonato,—Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick,—my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be

forsworn.—Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your grace lead on?

D. Pedro. Your hand, Leonato: we will go together. [*Exeunt all but* BENEDICK *and* CLAUDIO.

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not; but I looked on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No; I pray thee, speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise; only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest I am in sport: I pray thee, tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow, or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?

Claud. In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this, in faith? Hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look; Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter Don PEDRO.

D. Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bene. I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

D. Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance,—mark you this, on my allegiance:—he is in love. With who?—now that is your grace's part.—Mark, how short his answer is:—with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: it is not so, nor 't was not so; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

D. Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

D. Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

D. Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me: I will die in it at the stake.

D. Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor.

D. Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

D Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me ; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam.

D. Pedro. Well, as time shall try :

'In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.'

Bene. The savage bull may ; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and set them in my forehead ; and let me be vilely painted ; and in such great letters as they write, 'Here is good horse to hire,' let them signify under my sign,—'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too, then.

D. Pedro. Well, you will temporise with the hours. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's : commend me to him, and tell him, I will not fail him at supper ; for, indeed, he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage ; and so I commit you—

Claud. To the tuition of God. From my house, if I had it,—

D Pedro. The sixth of July: your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience: and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

D. Pedro. My love is thine to teach: teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

D. Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I looked upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am returned, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms

Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

D. Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it;
And I will break with her, and with her father,
And thou shalt have her. Was 't not to this end,
That thou begann'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salved it with a longer treatise.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit: 't is once, thou lovest;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night:
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I 'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then, after, to her father will I break;

And, the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—A Room in Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Leon. How now, brother? Where is my cousin, your son? Hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it? But, brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them; but they have a good cover; they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in my orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine: the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and, if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow: I will send for him; and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream, till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you, and tell her of it. [*Exit* ANTONIO. *Several persons cross the stage.*] Cousins, you know what you have to do.—O, I cry you mercy, friend; go you with me, and I will use your skill.—Good cousin, have a care this busy time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—Another Room in LEONATO's House.

Enter Don JOHN *and* CONRADE.

Con. What the good year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds; therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

Con. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder, that thou, being (as thou say'st thou art) born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I can-

not hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea; but you must not make the full show of this, till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace; where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here?

Enter BORACHIO.

What news, Borachio?

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper; the prince, your brother, is royally entertained by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

Bora. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference: I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it

agreed upon, that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

John. Come, come; let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper: their cheer is the greater, that I am subdued. 'Would the cook were of my mind!—Shall we go prove what 's to be done?

Bora. We 'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Hall in LEONATO'S House.

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, *and others.*

Leon. Was not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks: I never can see him, but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then, half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,—

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith: she 's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way, for it is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns;' but to a cow curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns?

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face: I had rather lie in the woollen.

Leon. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him: therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bearward, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well, then go you into hell?

Beat. No; but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say, 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice,

get you to heaven; here's no place for you maids:' so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter: for the heavens, he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. [*To* HERO.] Well, niece, I trust, you will be ruled by your father.

Beat. Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make courtesy, and say, 'Father, as it please you:' but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another courtesy, and say, 'Father, as it please me.'

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be over-mastered with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time: if the prince be

too important, tell him there is measure in everything, and so dance out the answer. For hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

Leon. The revellers are entering, brother. Make good room!

Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR, *Don* JOHN, BORACHIO, MARGARET, URSULA, *and others, masked.*

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away.

D. Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

D. Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend the lute should be like the case!

D. Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why, then your visor should be thatched.

D. Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

[*Takes her aside.*

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I, for your own sake; for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better; the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer!

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight, when the dance is done!—Answer, clerk.

Balth. No more words: the clerk is answered.

Urs. I know you well enough: you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless

you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down: you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales.'—Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy, for he both pleases men and angers them, and

then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure, he is in the fleet: I would he had boarded me!

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do: he'll but break a comparison or two on me; which, peradventure, not marked, or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. [*Music within.*] We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

[*Dance. Then exeunt all except Don* JOHN, BORACHIO, *and* CLAUDIO.

John. Sure, my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio: I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well; I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love: he is enamoured on Hero. I pray you, dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his

birth: you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt* JOHN *and* BORACHIO.

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
'T is certain so;—the prince woos for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love:
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent; beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, then, Hero!

Re-enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? About your neck, like an usurer's chain, or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drover: so they sell bullocks. But did you think, the prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man: 't was the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl! Now will he creep into sedges.—But, that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The prince's fool!—Ha! it may be I go under that title because I am merry.—Yea; but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed: it is the base, though bitter disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter Don PEDRO.

D. Pedro. Now, Signior, where 's the count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had got the good will of this young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

D. Pedro. To be whipped! What 's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a schoolboy; who, being overjoyed with finding a birds' nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D. Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stolen his birds' nest.

D. Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

D. Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you: the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

Bene. O, she misused me past the endurance of a block: an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her: my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester; that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance, upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her; you shall find her the infernal Até in good apparel. I would to God, some scholar would conjure her, for, certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

Enter CLAUDIO, BEATRICE, HERO, *and* LEONATO.

D. Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on: I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair of the Great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me?

D. Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, sir, here 's a dish I love not: I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. [*Exit*

D. Pedro. Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one: marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

D. Pedro. You have put him down, lady; you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

D. Pedro. Why, how now, count? wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

D. Pedro. How, then? sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil, count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

D. Pedro. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false.—Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won: I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it!

Beat. Speak, count, 't is your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much.—Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let him not speak neither.

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care.—My cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance!—Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner, and cry heigh-ho for a husband!

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days: your grace is too costly to wear every day.—But, I beseech your grace, pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but

then there was a star danced, and under that was I born.—Cousins, God give you joy.

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle.—By your grace's pardon. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leon. There is little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad, but when she sleeps; and not ever sad then, for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing.

D. Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O, by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

D. Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

D. Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is

hence a just seven-night; and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

D. Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labours; which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other. I would fain have it a match; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

D. Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

D. Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him: he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer

an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—Another room in Leonato's House.

Enter Don John *and* Borachio.

John. It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord: but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me: I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother: spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour anything.

Bora. Go then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone: tell them, that you know that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio, as—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozened with the semblance of a maid—that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber window, hear me call Margaret Hero; hear Margaret term me Claudio; and bring

them to see this the very night before the intended wedding: for in the meantime, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III.—Leonato's Garden.

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Boy,—

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber window lies a book; bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Bene. I know that; but I would have thee hence, and here again. [*Exit Boy.*] I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a

fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife: and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthographer: his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not; I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair,—yet I am well; another is wise,—yet I am well; another virtuous,—yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that 's certain; wise, or I 'll none; virtuous, or I 'll never cheapen her; fair, or I 'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent

musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha, the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour. [*Withdraws.*

Enter Don PEDRO, LEONATO, *and* CLAUDIO, *followed by* BALTHAZAR *and musicians.*

D. Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music?

Claud. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is,
As hushed on purpose to grace harmony!—

D. Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

Claud. O, very well, my lord: the music ended,
We'll fit the kid-fox with a pennyworth.—

D. Pedro. Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

D. Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency
To put a strange face on its own perfection.—
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing;
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit
To her he thinks not worthy; yet he wooes,
Yet will he swear he loves.

D. Pedro. Nay, pray thee, come:

Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes;
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

D. Pedro. Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks;
Note, notes, forsooth, and noting! [*Music.*

Bene. [*Aside.*] Now, divine air! now is his soul ravished!—Is it not strange, that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?—Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

Balth. [*Sings.*]

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea, and one on shore;
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into, Hey, nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo
Of dumps so dull and heavy;

The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so, &c.

D. Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

D. Pedro. Ha? no, no; faith thou singest well enough for a shift.

Bene. [*Aside.*] An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him; and I pray God, his bad voice bode no mischief! I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

D. Pedro. Yea, marry; dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray thee, get us some excellent music, for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord.

D. Pedro. Do so: farewell. [*Exeunt* BALTHAZAR *and Musicians.*] Come hither, Leonato; what was it you told me of to-day? that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. O, ay.—[*Aside to* PEDRO.] Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits.—I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful,

that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bene. [*Aside.*] Is 't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it, but that she loves him with an enraged affection,—it is past the infinite of thought.

D. Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. 'Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God, counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

D. Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?—

Claud. [*Aside.*] Bait the hook well: this fish will bite.—

Leon. What effects, my lord? She will sit you, —you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeed.

D. Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.—

Bene. [*Aside.*] I should think this a gull, but

that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.—

Claud. [*Aside.*] He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.—

D. Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No, and swears she never will: that's her torment.

Claud. 'T is true, indeed; so your daughter says: 'Shall I,' says she, 'that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?'

Leon. This says she, now, when she is beginning to write to him; for she 'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock, till she have writ a sheet of paper.—My daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O,—when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet?—

Claud. That.

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would

flout her:—'I measure him,' says she, 'by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me; yea, though I love him, I should.'

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses;—'O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!'

Leon. She doth indeed: my daughter says so; and the ecstacy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometimes afeard she will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true.

D. Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end? He would but make a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

D. Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady, and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

D. Pedro. In everything, but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O! my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one, that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

D. Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me; I would have daffed all other respects, and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. Hero thinks surely, she will die; for she says, she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

D. Pedro. She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 't is very possible he 'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

D. Pedro. He hath, indeed, a good outward happiness.

Claud. Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

D. Pedro. He doth, indeed, show some sparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

D. Pedro. As Hector, I assure you: and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, he must necessarily

keep peace: if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

D. Pedro. And so will he do; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord: let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible: she may wear her heart out first

D. Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter: let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.—

Claud. [*Aside.*] If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

D. Pedro. [*Aside.*] Let there be the same net spread for her; and that must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter: that's the scene that I would see,

which will be merely a dumb-show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO, CLAUDIO, *and* LEONATO.

Bene. [*Advancing from the arbour.*] This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems, her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say, I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say, too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.—I did never think to marry.—I must not seem proud,—Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say, the lady is fair: 't is a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous: 't is so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me. By my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of

the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No; the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.—Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal.—You have no stomach, signior: fare you well. [*Exit.*

Bene. Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner;'—there 's a double meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks, than you took pains to thank me;'—that 's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks.—If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

Scene I.—Leonato's Garden.

Enter Hero, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the prince and Claudio:
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say, that thou overheardst us,
And bid her steal into the pleachéd bower
Where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter; like favourites
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power that bred it.—There will she hide her,
To listen our propose. This is thy office;
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. [*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick:
When I do name him, let it be thy part

To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice: of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay. Now begin:

Enter BEATRICE, *behind.*

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:
So angle we for Beatrice; who even now
Is couchéd in the woodbine coverture.
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.—
No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;
I know, her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.

Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothéd lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;

But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urs. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full as fortunate a bed
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

Hero. O god of love! I know, he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man;
But Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice:
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.

Urs. Sure, I think so;
And therefore, certainly, it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,
But she would spell him backward: if fair-faced,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antick,

Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block movéd with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Hero. No; not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
She 'd mock me into air: O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Urs. Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

Hero. No; rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I 'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with. One doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment—

Having so swift and excellent a wit,
As she is prized to have—as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.—
When are you married, madam?

Hero. Why, every day;—to-morrow. Come, go in:
I 'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.—

Urs. [*Aside.*] She 's limed, I warrant you: we have caught her, madam.

Hero. [*Aside.*] If it prove so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.—

[*Exeunt* HERO *and* URSULA.

Beat. [*Advancing.*] What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on : I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band ;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*

Scene II.—A Room in Leonato's House.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, *and* Leonato.

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Aragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat, and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company ; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he is all mirth : he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bowstring, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him. He hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper,—for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I: methinks, you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love. If he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the toothache.

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it!

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D. Pedro. What! sigh for the toothache?

Leon. Where is but a humour, or a worm?

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love.

D. Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downwards, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman

there is no believing old signs. He brushes his hat o' mornings: what should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lute-string, and now governed by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D. Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and all his ill conditions; and, in despite of all, dies for him.

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet it is no charm for the toothache.—Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt* BENEDICK *and* LEONATO.

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'T is even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter JOHN.

John. My lord and brother, God save you.

D. Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private?

John. If it please you; yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

D. Pedro. What 's the matter?

John. [*To* CLAUD.] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

D. Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you, discover it.

John. You may think, I love you not: let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think, he holds you well, and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage; surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed!

D. Pedro. Why, what 's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you: and circumstances shortened—for she has been too long a talking of—the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who? Hero?

John. Even she: Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say, she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered,

even the night before her wedding-day: if you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me I will show you enough; and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow: in the congregation where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D. Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no further, till you are my witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

John. O plague right well prevented!

So will you say, when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene III.—A Street.

Enter Dogberry *and* Verges, *with the Watch.*

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

1 *Watch.* Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

2 *Watch.* Both which, master constable,—

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to

be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge:—you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

2 *Watch.* How, if a' will not stand?

Dogb. Why, then take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects.—You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

2 *Watch.* We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

2 *Watch.* How if they will not?

Dogb. Why, then let them alone till they are

sober: if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

2 *Watch.* Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2 *Watch.* If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office you may; but, I think, they that touch pitch will be defiled. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

2 *Watch.* How, if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will

not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'T is very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You, constable, are to present the prince's own person; if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by 'r lady, that, I think, a' cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statues, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By 'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ah-ha? Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night. Come, neighbour.

2 *Watch.* Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu, be vigitant, I beseech you. [*Exeunt* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Enter BORACHIO *and* CONRADE.

Bora. What, Conrade!—

Watch. [*Aside.*] Peace! stir not.—

Bora. Conrade, I say!

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought, there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.—

Watch. [*Aside.*] Some treason, masters; yet stand close.—

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask, if it were possible any villainy should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest, that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush! I may as well say, the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?—

Watch. [*Aside.*] I know that Deformed; a' has been a vile thief this seven year; a' goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.—

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No: 't was the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometime, fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting; sometime, like god Bel's priests in the old church-window; sometime, like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club?

Con. All this I see, and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither; but know, that I have

to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee, how the prince, Claudio, and my master, planted, and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw over-night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 *Watch.* We charge you in the prince's name, stand.

2 *Watch.* Call up the right master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery, that ever was known in the commonwealth

1 *Watch.* And one Deformed is one of them: I know him; a' wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters,—

2 *Watch.* You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters,—

1 *Watch.* Never speak: we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you.—Come, we'll obey you. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV.—A Room in Leonato's House.

Enter Hero, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. [*Exit.*

Marg. Troth, I think, your other rabato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth 's not so good; and I warrant, your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin 's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown 's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown, that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth 's but a night-gown in respect of yours,—cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts round, underborne with a bluish tinsel; but for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on 't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy!

Marg. 'T will be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee! art not ashamed?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think, you would have me say, saving your reverence,—a husband: an' bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I 'll offend nobody. Is there any harm in—the heavier for a husband? None, I think, an it be the right husband, and the right wife;

otherwise 't is light, and not heavy: ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now? do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap 's into 'Light o' love;' that goes without a burden: do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yea, 'Light o' love,' with your heels!—then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barns.

Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'T is almost five o'clock, cousin: 't is time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill—heigh-ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turned Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow?

Marg. Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire!

Hero. These gloves the count sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuffed, cousin, I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuffed! there's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O, God help me, God help me! how long have you professed apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap.—By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus! why, Benedictus? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

Marg. Moral? no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think, perchance, that I think you are in love: nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he

swore he would never marry; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging: and how you may be converted, I know not, but, methinks, you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Mary. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, withdraw: the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—Another Room in LEONATO'S House.

Enter LEONATO, *with* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for, you see, it is a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir,—

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous: *palabras*, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ha!

Dogb. Yea, and 't were a thousand pound more than 't is; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out. God help us! it is a world to see!—Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges:—Well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind.—An honest soul, i' faith, sir: by my troth he is, as ever broke bread: but, God is to be worshipped: all men are not alike,—alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have, indeed, comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me: I am now in great haste, as may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I 'll wait upon them : I am ready.

[*Exeunt* LEONATO *and Messenger.*

Dogb. Go, good partner, go ; get you to Francis Seacoal ; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol : we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you ; here 's that shall drive some of them to a *non-come :* only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Scene I.—The Inside of a Church.

Enter Don Pedro, *Don* John, Leonato, *Friar* Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, *and Attendants.*

Leon. Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Fri. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her:—friar, you come to marry her.

Fri. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Fri. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Fri. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer; none.

Claud. O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? Why, then some be of laughing, as, ha! ha! he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar.—Father, by your leave:
Will you with free and unconstrainéd soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.—
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She 's but the sign and semblance of her honour.—
Behold, how like a maid she blushes here:
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood, as modest evidence,
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;

Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord?

Claud. Not to be married, not to knit my soul
To an approvéd wanton.

Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity,—

Claud. I know what you would say: if I have known her,
You 'll say, she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin:
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to his sister, showed
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero. And seemed I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it,
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pampered animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

Claud. Sweet prince, why speak not you?

D. Pedro. What should I speak?
I stand dishonoured, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.
Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.
Hero. True!—O God!
Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is so; but what of this, my lord?
Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter,
And, by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.
Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.
Hero. O God, defend me! how am I beset!—
What kind of catechising call you this?
Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach?
Claud. Marry, that can Hero:
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.

What man was he talked with you yesternight
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Hero. I talked with no man at that hour, my lord.

D. Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden.—Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grievéd count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath, indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confessed the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie: they are not to be named, my lord,
Not to be spoke of;
There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence to utter them.—Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About the thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But, fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity!
For thee I 'll lock up all the gates of love,

And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me? [HERO *swoons.*

Beat. Why, how now, cousin! wherefore sink you down?

John. Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.

[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO, JOHN, *and* CLAUDIO.

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think:—help, uncle!—
Hero! why, Hero!—Uncle!—Signior Benedick!—Friar!

Leon. O fate, take not away thy heavy hand!
Death is the fairest cover for her shame,
That may be wished for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero?

Fri. Have comfort, lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Fri. Yea; wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?—

Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal Nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates;
Who smirchéd thus, and mired with infamy,
I might have said, 'No part of it is mine,
This shame derives itself from unknown loins?'
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I praised,
And mine that I was proud on; mine so much,
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her; why, she—O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul-tainted flesh!

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attired in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

Beat. No, truly, not; although, until last night, I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirmed, confirmed! O, that is stronger made,
Which was before barred up with ribs of iron!
Would the two princes lie? and Claudio lie,
Who loved her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Washed it with tears? Hence from her, let her die.

Fri. Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady: I have marked
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appeared a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth.—Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading, nor my observation,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenor of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here

Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest, that all the grace that she hath left,
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury: she not denies it.
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness?

Fri. Lady, what man is he you are accused of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none.
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy!—O my father,
Prove you that any man with me conversed
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintained the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Fri. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

Leon. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,

These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awaked in such a kind,
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means, and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

Fri. Pause awhile,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead:
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed;
Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

Fri. Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse;—that is some good:
But not for that dream I on this strange course,

But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintained,
Upon the instant that she was accused,
Shall be lamented, pitied and excused
Of every hearer; for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lacked and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue, that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours.—So will it fare with Claudio;
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she lived indeed; then shall he mourn,—
If ever love had interest in his liver—
And wish he had not so accuséd her;
No, though he thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levelled false,

The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy:
And, if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
As best befits her wounded reputation,
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Fri. 'T is well consented: presently away;
For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.—
Come, lady, die to live: this wedding day,
Perhaps, is but prolonged: have patience, and endure.

[*Exeunt Friar*, HERO, *and* LEONATO.

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason; I do it freely.

Bene. Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you; but believe me not, and yet I lie not: I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing.—I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it, that you love me; and I will make him eat it, that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest, I love thee.

Beat. Why then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to protest, I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do anything for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here.—There is no love in you.—Nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We 'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman?—O, that I were a man!—What! bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice,—

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window!—a proper saying.

Bene. Nay, but, Beatrice,—

Beat. Sweet Hero!—she is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, count confect; a sweet gallant, surely! O, that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it.—I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough! I am engaged, I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you.

By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin; I must say she is dead; and so, farewell. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—A Prison.

Enter Dogberry, Verges, *and Sexton, in gowns; and the Watch, with* Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain: We have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me.—What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray, write down — Borachio. — Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogb. Write down—master gentleman Conrade.

—Masters, do you serve God?

Con. } Yea, sir, we hope.
Bora. }

Dogb. Write down—that they hope they serve God:—and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains!—Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him.—Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear, sir: I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside.—'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down—that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine: you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the eftest way.—Let the watch come forth.—Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

1 *Watch.* This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down — Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2 *Watch.* Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

1 *Watch.* And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 *Watch.* This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and, upon the grief of this, suddenly died.—Master constable, let these men be

bound, and brought to Leonato's: I will go before, and show him their examination. [*Exit.*

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned.

Verg. Let them be in the hands—

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dogb. God's my life! where's the sexton? let him write down—the prince's officer, coxcomb.—Come, bind them.—Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away! you are an ass; you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years?—O, that he were here to write me down an ass!—but, masters, remember, that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him.—Bring him away.—O, that I had been writ down an ass! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Before LEONATO'S House.

Enter LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 't is not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve. Give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine:
Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelmed like mine,
And bid him speak of patience:
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain;
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form:
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
Bid sorrow wag, cry hem when he should groan;
Patch grief with proverbs; make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters: bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.

But there is no such man; for, brother, men
Can counsel, and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air, and agony with words.
No, no; 't is all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace! I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself,
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;

And that shall Claudio know; so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

Ant. Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.

D. Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords,—

D. Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord!—well, fare you well, my lord:—

Are you so hasty now?—well, all is one.

D. Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him?

Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me; thou, dissembler, thou.—

Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand
If it should give your age such cause of fear.
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man, never fleer and jest at me:

I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wronged mine innocent child and me,
That I am forced to lay my reverence by,
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say, thou hast belied mine innocent child:
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors,
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, framed by thy villainy.

Claud. My villainy?

Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine, I say.

D. Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,
Despite his nice fence and his active practice,
His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

Claud. Away! I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast killed my child:
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed:

But that 's no matter ; let him kill one first ;—
Win me and wear me,—let him answer me.—
Come, follow me, boy ; come, sir boy, come, follow me.
Sir boy, I 'll whip you from your foining fence ;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother,—

Ant. Content yourself. God knows, I loved my niece ;
And she is dead ; slandered to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops !—

Leon. Brother Antony,—

Ant. Hold you content. What, man, I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple ;
Scrambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,
Go antickly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst ;
And this is all !

Leon. But, brother Antony,—

Ant. Come, 't is no matter :
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

D. Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, she was charged with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord—

D. Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No?
Come, brother, away.—I will be heard.—

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt* LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

Enter BENEDICK.

D. Pedro. See, see: here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

D. Pedro. Welcome, signior: you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.

D. Pedro. Leonato and his brother. What think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

D. Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit.—I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw to pleasure us.

D. Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale.—Art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What, courage, man! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me. I pray you, choose another subject.

Claud. Nay, then give him another staff: this last was broke cross.

D. Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain.—I jest not.—I will

make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare.—Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

D. Pedro. What, a feast? a feast?

Claud. I' faith, I thank him: he hath bid me to a calf's head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught.—Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well: it goes easily.

D. Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said, thou hadst a fine wit. 'True,' said she, 'a fine little one.' 'No,' said I, 'a great wit.' 'Right,' says she, 'a great gross one.' 'Nay,' said I, 'a good wit.' 'Just,' said she, 'it hurts nobody.' 'Nay,' said I, 'the gentleman is wise.' 'Certain,' said she, 'a wise gentleman.' 'Nay,' said I, 'he hath the tongues.' 'That I believe,' said she, 'for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning: there's a double tongue; there's two tongues.' Thus did she, an hour together,

trans-shape thy particular virtues; yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily, and said she cared not.

D. Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. The old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all; and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

D. Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, 'Here dwells Benedick the married man!'

Bene. Fare you well, boy: you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour: you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not.—My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I must discontinue your company. Your brother, the bastard, is fled from Messina: you have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet; and till then, peace be with him. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D. Pedro. And hath challenged thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

D. Pedro. But, soft you; let me be: pluck up my heart, and be sad! Did he not say, my brother was fled?

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and the Watch, with* CONRADE *and* BORACHIO.

Dogb. Come you, sir: if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

D. Pedro. How now! two of my brother's men bound! Borachio one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord!

D. Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths;

secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

D. Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division; and, by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.

D. Pedro. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light; who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record, which I had

rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

D. Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison whiles he uttered it.

D. Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea; and paid me richly for the practice of it.

D. Pedro. He is composed and framed of treachery.—
And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs: by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter. And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Re-enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, *and the Sexton.*

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,

That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him. Which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave, that with thy breath hast killed
Mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself:
Here stand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.—
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death:
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'T was bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin; yet sinned I not
But in mistaking.

D. Pedro. By my soul, nor I;
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he 'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,
That were impossible; but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here

How innocent she died; and, if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones:—sing it to-night.—
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us:
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me.
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
From henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming;
To-night I take my leave.—This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was packed in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my soul she was not;
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous
In anything that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir, which, indeed, is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment. And also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed: they say, he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath used so long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; and I praise God for you.

Leon. There 's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation.

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship; which I beseech your worship to correct yourself for the example of others. God keep your worship; I wish your worship well; God restore you to health. I humbly give you leave to depart, and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it!—Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and Watch.*

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords: we look for you to-morrow.

D. Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I 'll mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

Leon. Bring you these fellows on. We 'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—LEONATO'S Garden.

Enter BENEDICK *and* MARGARET, *meeting.*

Bene. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth; it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a woman; and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice. I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice; and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who, I think, hath legs.

Bene. And therefore will come. [*Exit* MARG.

[*Singing.*]

The god of love,
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve,—

I mean, in singing; but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried: I can find out no rhyme to 'lady'

but 'baby,' an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rhyme; for 'school,' 'fool,' a babbling rhyme—very ominous endings. No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.—

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

Beat. Yea, signior; and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then!

Beat. 'Then' is spoken; fare you well now:—and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came; which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unkissed.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But, I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together; which maintained so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love,—a good epithet. I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there 's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect, in this age, his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question:—why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum: therefore is it most expedient for the wise—if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary—to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for

praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home: it is proved, my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes; and, moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III.—The Inside of a Church.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, *and Attendants, with music and tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?
Atten. It is, my lord.
Claud. [*Reads from a scroll.*]

'Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies:'
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life, that died with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.'

Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.—
Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

Song.

Pardon, goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight;
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight, assist our moan;
Help us to sigh and groan,

Heavily, heavily:
Graves, yawn and yield your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heavily, heavily.

Claud. Now, unto thy bones good night!
Yearly will I do this rite.

D. Pedro. Good morrow, masters: put your torches out.
The wolves have preyed; and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us: fare you well.

Claud. Good morrow, masters: each his several way.

D. Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds;
And then to Leonato's we will go.

Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed 's,
Than this, for whom we rendered up this woe!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene IV.—A Room in Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Margaret, Beatrice, Ursula, *Friar* Francis, *and* Hero.

Fri. Did I not tell you she was innocent?

Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforced
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And, when I send for you, come hither masked:
The prince and Claudio promised by this hour
To visit me. [*Exeunt Ladies.*]—You know your office, brother:
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

Ant. Which I will do with confirmed countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Fri. To do what, signior?

Bene. To bind me, or undo me; one of them.—
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her: 'tis most true.

Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leon. The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From Claudio, and the prince. But what's your will?

Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoined
In the state of honourable marriage:—
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Fri. And my help.
Here come the prince and Claudio.

Enter Don PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO, *with Attendants.*

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:
We here attend you. Are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud. I 'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.

Leon. Call her forth, brother: here 's the friar ready. [*Exit* ANTONIO.

D. Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what 's the matter,

That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Claud. I think, he thinks upon the savage bull.—

Tush! fear not, man, we 'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low:
And some such strange bull leaped your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Re-enter ANTONIO, *with the Ladies masked.*

Claud. For this I owe you: here come other reckonings.
Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why, then she 's mine.—Sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.
Claud. Give me your hand before this holy friar:
I am your husband, if you like of me.
Hero. And when I lived, I was your other wife: [*Unmasking.*
And when you loved, you were my other husband.
Claud. Another Hero?
Hero. Nothing certainer.
One Hero died defiled; but I do live,
And, surely as I live, I am a maid.
D. Pedro. The former Hero! Hero that is dead!
Leon. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.
Fri. All this amazement can I qualify:
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I 'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:
Meantime, let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.
Bene. Soft and fair, friar.—Which is Beatrice?
Beat. I answer to that name. [*Unmasking.*]
What is your will?
Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. Why, no; no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then, your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio, have been deceived: they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth, no; no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula

Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'T is no such matter. Then, you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I 'll be sworn upon 't, that he loves her;

For here 's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashioned to Beatrice.

Hero. And here 's another,

Writ in my cousin's hand, stol 'n from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts.—Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you;—but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, and, partly, to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace! I will stop your mouth.

D. Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it, for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion.—For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but, in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer;

which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends. Let 's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

Leon. We 'll have dancing afterward.

Bene. First, of my word ; therefore play, music ! —Prince, thou art sad ; get thee a wife, get thee a wife : there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with arméd men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow : I 'll devise thee brave punishments for him.—Strike up, pipers. [*Dance. Exeunt.*

ARIODANTES AND GENEURA.

ARIODANTES AND GENEURA.

From Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," Canto IV. 51 to VI. 15.

DAY after day the good Rinaldo fares,
Forced by the wind, the spacious ocean through;
Now westward borne, and now towards the BEARS;
For night and day the ceaseless tempest blew.
Scotland at last her dusky coast uprears,
And gives the Caledonian wood to view;
Which, through its shadowy groves of ancient oak,
Oft echoes to the champion's sturdy stroke.

Through this roves many a famous cavalier,
Renowned for feat in arms, of British strain;
And throng from distant land, or country near,
French, Norse, or German knights, a numerous train.
Let none, save he be valiant, venture here,
Where, seeking glory, death may be his gain.

Here Arthur, Galahad, and Gawaine fought,
And well Sir Launcelot and Tristram wrought.

And other worthies of the table round
(Of either table, whether old or new);
Whose trophies yet remain upon the ground;
Proof of their valiant feats. Rinaldo true
Forthwith his armour and Bayardo found,
And landed on the woody coast. The crew
He bade, with all the haste they might, repair
To Berwick's neighbouring port, and wait him there.

Without a guide or company he went
Through that wide forest; choosing now this way,
Now that, now other, as it might present
Hope of adventurous quest or hard assay:
And, ere the first day's circling sun is spent,
The peer is guested in an abbey grey:
Which spends much wealth in harbouring those who claim
Its shelter, warlike knight or wandering dame.

The monks and abbot to Mount Alban's peer
A goodly welcome in their house accord;

Who asked, but not before with savoury cheer
He amply had his wearied strength restored,
If in that tract by errant cavalier
Often adventurous quest might be explored,
In which a man might prove, by dangerous deed,
If blame or glory were his fitting meed.

They answered, in those woods he might be sure
Many and strange adventures would be found;
But deeds there wrought were, like the place, obscure,
And for the greater part not bruited round.
"Then seek (they said) a worthier quest, secure
Your works will not be buried underground
So that the glorious act achieved, as due,
Fame may your peril and your pain pursue.

"And if you would your warlike worth assay
Prepare the worthiest enterprise to hear,
That, e'er in times of old or present day,
Was undertaken by a cavalier.
Our monarch's daughter needs some friendly stay,
Now sore bested, against a puissant peer:
Lurcanio is the doughty baron's name,
Who would bereave her both of life and fame.

"Her he before her father does pursue,
Perchance yet more for hatred than for right;
And vouches, to a gallery she updrew
A lover, seen by him, at dead of night.
Hence death by fire will be the damsel's due,
Such is our law, unless some champion fight
On her behalf, and, ere a month go by,
(Nigh spent) upon the accuser prove the lie.

"Our impious Scottish law, severe and dread,
Wills that a woman, whether low or high
Her state, who takes a man into her bed,
Except her husband, for the offence shall die.
Nor is there hope of ransom for her head,
Unless to her defence some warrior hie;
And as her champion true, with spear and shield,
Maintain her guiltless in the listed field.

"The king, sore grieving for Geneura bright,
For such is his unhappy daughter's name,
Proclaims by town and city, that the knight
Who shall deliver her from death and shame,
He to the royal damsel will unite,
With dower well suited to a royal dame;
So that the valiant warrior who has stood
In her defence, be come of gentle blood.

"But if within a month no knight appear,
Or coming, conquer not, the damsel dies.
A like emprise were worthier of your spear
Than wandering through these woods in lowly guise.
Besides, the eternal trophy you shall rear,
You by the deed shall gain a glorious prize,
The sweetest flower of all the ladies fair
That betwixt Ind and Atlas' pillars are.

"And you with wealth and state shall guerdoned be,
So that you evermore may live content,
And the king's grace, if through your means he see
His honour raised anew, now well-nigh spent.
Besides, you by the laws of chivalry
Are bound to venge the damsel foully shent.
For she, whose life is by such treason sought,
Is chaste and spotless in the common thought."

When the new dawn, with streaks of red and white,
Broke in the east, and cleared the hemisphere,
Rinaldo took his steed and armour bright:
A squire that abbey furnished to the peer.

With him, for many leagues and miles, the knight
Pricked through the dismal forest dark and drear;
While they towards the Scottish city ride,
Where the poor damsel's cause is to be tried.

Seeking their way to shorten as they wound,
They to the wider track a path preferred;
When echoing through the gloomy forest round,
Loud lamentations nigh the road were heard.
Towards a neighbouring vale, whence came the sound,
This his Bayardo, that his hackney spurred;
And viewed, between two grisly ruffians there,
A girl, who seemed at distance passing fair.

But woe-begone and weeping was the maid
As ever damsel, dame, or wight was seen;
Hard by the barbarous twain prepared the blade,
To deluge with that damsel's blood the green.
She to delay her death awhile essayed,
Until she pity moved with mournful mien.
This when Rinaldo near approaching eyes,
He thither drives with threats and furious cries.

The ruffians turn their backs and take to flight
As soon as they the distant succour view,

And squat within a valley out of sight:
Nor cares the good Rinaldo to pursue.
To her approaching, sues Mount Alban's knight,
To say what on her head such evil drew;
And, to save time, commands his squire to stoop,
And take the damsel on his horse's croup.

And as the lady nearer he surveyed,
Her wise behaviour marked and beauty's bloom;
Though her fair countenance was all dismayed,
And by the fear of death o'erspread with gloom
Again to know, the gentle knight essayed,
Who had prepared for her so fell a doom;
And she began to tell in humble tone
What to another canto I postpone.

"Of direr deed than ever yet was done,"
The gentle dame began, "Sir cavalier,
In Thebes, Mycene, Argos, or upon
Other more savage soil, prepare to hear;
And I believe that if the circling sun
To these our Scottish shores approach less near
Than other land, 't is that he would eschew
A foul ferocious race that shocks his view.

"All times have shown that man has still pursued
With hate, in every clime, his natural foe;
But to deal death to those who seek our good
Does from too ill and foul a nature flow.
Now, that the truth be better understood,
I shall from first to last the occasion show,
Why in my tender years, against all right,
Those caitiffs would have done me foul despite

"'T is fitting you should know that, in the spring
Of life, I to the palace made resort;
There served long time the daughter of the king,
And grew with her in growth, well placed in court.
When cruel love, my fortune envying,
Willed I should be his follower and his sport;
And made, beyond each Scottish lord and knight,
Albany's duke find favour in my sight.

"And for he seemed to cherish me above
All mean; his love a love as ardent bred.
We hear, indeed, and see, but do not prove
Man's faith, nor is his bosom's purpose read.
Believing still, and yielding to my love,
I ceased not till I took him to my bed;
Nor, of all chambers, in that evil hour,
Marked I was in Geneura's priviest bower.

"Where, hoarded, she with careful privacy
Preserved whatever she esteemed most rare;
There many times she slept. A gallery
From thence projected into the open air.
Here oft I made my lover climb to me,
And (what he was to mount) a hempen stair,
When him I to my longing arms would call,
From the projecting balcony let fall.

"For here my passion I as often fed
As good Geneura's absence made me bold;
Who with the varying season changed her bed,
To shun the burning heat or pinching cold,
And Albany, unseen and safely sped;
For, fronting a dismantled street, and old,
Was built that portion of the palace bright;
Nor any went that way by day or night.

"So was for many days and months maintained
By us, in secrecy, the amorous game;
Still grew my love, and such new vigour gained,
I in my inmost bosom felt the flame;
And that he little loved, and deeply feigned,
Weened not, so was I blinded to my shame:
Though, in a thousand certain signs betrayed,
The faithless knight his base deceit bewrayed.

"After some days, of fair Geneura he
A suitor showed himself; I cannot say
If this began before he sighed for me,
Or after of this love he made assay:
But judge, alas! with what supremacy
He ruled my heart, how absolute his sway!
Since this he owned, and thought no shame to move
Me to assist him in his second love.

"Unlike what he bore me, he said, indeed,
That was not true which he for her displayed:
But so pretending love, he hoped to speed,
And celebrate due spousals with the maid.
He with her royal sire might well succeed,
Were she consenting to the boon he prayed;
For after our good king, for wealth and birth
In all the realm, was none of equal worth.

"Me he persuades, if through my ministry
He the king's son-in-law elected were,
For I must know he next the king would be
Advanced as high as subject could repair,
The merit should be mine, and ever he
So great a benefit in mind would bear;
And he would cherish me above his bride,
And more than every other dame beside.

"I, who to please him was entirely bent,
Who never could or would gainsay his will,
Upon those days alone enjoy content,
When I find means his wishes to fulfil:
And snatch at all occasions which present
A mode his praise and merits to instil:
And for my lover with all labour strain,
And industry, Geneura's love to gain.

"With all my heart, in furtherance of his suit,
I wrought what could be done, God truly knows;
But with Geneura this produced no fruit,
Nor her to grace my duke could I dispose.
For that another love had taken root
In her, whose every fond affection flows
Towards a gentle knight of courteous lore,
Who sought our Scotland from a distant shore:

"And with a brother, then right young, to stay
In our king's court, came out of Italy;
And there of knightly arms made such assay,
Was none in Britain more approved than he;
Prized by the king, who (no ignoble pay),
Rewarding him like his nobility,
Bestowed upon the youth, with liberal hand,
Burghs, baronies, and castles, woods and land.

"Dear to the monarch, to the daughter still
This lord was dearer, Ariodantes hight.
Her with affection might his valour fill;
But knowledge of his love brought more delight.
Nor old Vesuvius, nor Sicilia's hill,
Nor Troy-town, ever, with a blaze so bright,
Flamed, as with all his heart, the damsel learned,
For love of her young Ariodantes burned.

"The passion which she bore the lord, preferred
And loved with perfect truth and all her heart,
Was the occasion I was still unheard;
Nor hopeful answer would she e'er impart:
And still the more my lover's suit I stirred,
And to obtain his guerdon strove with art,
Him she would censure still, and ever more
Was strengthened in the hate she nursed before.

"My wayward lover often I excite
So vain and bootless an emprize to quit;
Nor idly hope to turn her steadfast sprite,
Too deeply with another passion smit;
And make apparent to the Scottish knight
Ariodantes such a flame had lit
In the young damsel's breast, that seas in flood
Would not have cooled one with her boiling blood.

"This Polinesso many times had heard
From me (for such the Scottish baron's name)
Well warranted by sight as well as word,
How ill his love was cherished by the dame.
To see another to himself preferred
Not only quenched the haughty warrior's flame
But the fond love which in his bosom burned
Into despiteful rage and hatred turned.

Between Geneura and her faithful knight
Such discord and ill will he schemed to shed,
And put betwixt the pair such foul despite,
No time should heal the quarrel he had bred;
Bringing such scandal on that damsel bright,
The stain should cleave to her, alive or dead:
Nor, bent to wreck her on this fatal shelf,
Counselled with me, or other but himself.

'Dalinda mine,' he said, his project brewed
(Dalinda is my name), 'you needs must know,
That from the root although the trunk be hewed,
Successive suckers many times will grow.
Thus my unhappy passion is renewed,
Tenacious still of life, and buds; although
Cut off by ill success, with new increase:
Nor, till I compass my desire, will cease.

"'Nor hope of pleasure this so much has wrought,
As that to compass my design would please;
And if not in effect, at least in thought
To thrive, would interpose some little ease.
Then every time your bower by me is sought,
When in her bed Geneura slumbers, seize
What she puts off, and be it still your care
To dress yourself in all her daily wear.

"'Dispose your locks and deck yourself as she
Goes decked; and, as you can, with cunning heed,
Imitate her; then to the gallery
You, furnished with the corded stair, shall speed:
I shall ascend it in the phantasy
That you are she, of whom you wear the weed:
And hope, that putting on myself this cheat,
I in short time shall quench my amorous heat.'

"So said the knight; and I, who was distraught,
And all beside myself, was not aware
That the design, in which he help besought,
Was manifestly but too foul a snare;
And in Geneura's clothes disguised, as taught,
Let down (so oft I used) the corded stair.

Nor I the traitor's foul deceit perceived
Until the deadly mischief was achieved.

"The duke, this while, to Ariodantes' ears
Had these, or other words like these, addressed
(For leagued in friendship were the cavaliers,
Till, rivals, they pursued this common quest):
'I marvel, since you are of all my peers
He whom I most have honoured and caressed,
And held in high regard, and cherished still,
You should my benefits repay so ill.

"'I am assured you comprehend and know
Mine and Geneura's love, an old accord;
And, in legitimate espousal, how
I am about to claim her from my lord:
Then why disturb my suit, and why bestow
Your heart on her who offers no reward?
By Heaven, I should respect your claim and
place,
Were your condition mine, and mine your case.'

"'And I,' cried Ariodantes, 'marvel more'
(In answer to the Scottish lord) 'at you,
Since I of her enamoured was before
That gentle damsel ever met your view;

And know, you are assured how evermore
We two have loved;—was never love more
true—
Are certain she alone would share my lot;
And are as well assured she loves you not.

"'Why have not I from you the same respect
To which, for friendship past, you would pre-
tend
From me; and I should bear you in effect
If your hope stood more fair to gain its end?
No less than you, to wed her I expect;
And if your fortune here my wealth transcend,
As favoured of the king as you, above
You, am I happy in his daughter's love.'

"'Of what a strange mistake,' to him replied
The Duke, 'your foolish passion is the root!
You think yourself beloved; I, on my side,
Believe the same; this try we by the fruit.
You of your own proceeding nothing hide,
And I will tell the secrets of my suit:
And let the man who proves least favoured
yield,
Provide himself elsewhere, and quit the field.

"'I am prepared, if such your wish, to swear
Nothing of what is told me to reveal;
And will that you assure me, for your share,
You shall what I recount as well conceal.'
Uniting in the pact the rival pair
Their solemn vows upon the Bible seal:
And when they had the mutual promise
plighted,
Ariodantes first his tale recited.

"Then plainly, and by simple facts averred,
How with Geneura stood his suit, avows:
And how, engaged by writing and by word,
She swore she would not be another's spouse.
How, if to him the Scottish king demurred,
Virgin austerity she ever vows:
And other bridal bond for aye eschewed,
To pass her days in barren solitude.

"Then added, how he hoped by worth, which he
Had more than once avouched, with knightly
brand,
And yet might vouch, to the prosperity
And honour of the king, and of his land,
To please so well that monarch, as to be
By him accounted worthy of the hand

Of his fair child, espoused with his consent:
Since he in this her wishes would content.

"Then so concludes—'I stand upon this ground,
Nor I intruder fear, encroaching nigh;
Nor seek I more; 't is here my hopes I bound,
Nor, striving for Geneura's love, would I
Seek surer sign of it than what is found,
By God allowed, in wedlock's lawful tie;
And other suit were hopeless, am I sure,
So excellent she is, and passing pure.'

"When Ariodantes had, with honest mind,
Told what reward he hoped should quit his pain,
False Polinesso, who before designed
To make Geneura hateful to her swain,
Began—'Alas! you yet are far behind
My hopes, and shall confess your own are vain
And say, as I the root shall manifest
Of my good fortune, I alone am blest.

"'With you Geneura feigns, nor pays nor prizes
Your passion, which with hopes and words is fed;
And, more than this, your foolish love despises:
And this to me the damsel oft has said.

Of hers I am assured; of no surmises,
Vain, worthless words, or idle promise bred.
And I to you the fact in trust reveal,
Though this I should in better faith conceal.

"'There passes not a month, but in that space
Three nights, four, six, and often ten, the fair
Receives me with that joy in her embrace,
Which seems to second so the warmth we share.
This you may witness, and shall judge the case;
If empty hopes can with my bliss compare.
Then since my happier fortune is above
Your wishes, yield, and seek another love.'

"'This will I not believe,' in answer cried
Ariodantes, 'well assured you lie,
And that you have this string of falsehoods tied
To scare me from the dear emprise I try.
But charge so passing foul you shall abide,
And vouch what you have said in arms; for I
Not only on your tale place no reliance
But as a traitor hurl you my defiance.'

"To him rejoined the duke, 'I ween 't were ill
To take the battle upon either part,

Since surer mean our purpose may fulfil;
And if it please, my proof I can impart.'
Ariodantes trembled, and a chill
Went through his inmost bones; and sick at heart,
Had he in full believed his rival's boast,
Would on the spot have yielded up the ghost.

'With wounded heart, and faltering voice, pale face,
And mouth of gall, he answered, 'When I see
Proofs of thy rare adventure, and the grace
With which the fair Geneura honours thee,
I promise to forego the fruitless chase
Of one, to thee so kind, so cold to me.
But think not that thy story shall avail,
Unless my very eyes confirm the tale.'

'To warn you in due time shall be my care,'
Said Polinesso, and so went his way.
Two nights were scarcely passed, ere his repair
To the known bower was fixed for the assay.
And, ready now to spring his secret snare,
He sought his rival on the appointed day,
And him to hide, the night ensuing, prayed
I' the street, which none their habitation made.

"And to the youth a station over-right
The balcony, to which he clambered, shows.
Ariodantes weened, this while, the knight
Would him to seek that hidden place dispose,
As one well suited to his fell despite,
And, bent to take his life, this ambush chose,
Under the false pretence to make him see
What seemed a sheer impossibility.

"To go the peer resolved, but in such guise
He should not be with vantage overlaid;
And should he be assaulted by surprise,
He need not be by fear of death dismayed.
He had a noble brother, bold and wise,
First of the court in arms; and on his aid,
Lurcanio hight, relied with better heart
Than if ten others fought upon his part.

"He called him to his side, and willed him take
His arms; and to the place at evening led:
Yet not his secret purpose would he break:
Nor this to him or other would have read.
Him a stone's-throw removed he placed and spake:
'Come if thou hearest me cry,' the warrior said;

'But as thou lovest me, whatsoe'er befall,
Come not and move not, brother, till I call.'

"'Doubt not,' the valiant brother said, 'but go;'
And thither went that baron silently,
And hid within the lonely house and low,
Over against my secret gallery.
On the other side approached the fraudful foe,
So pleased to work Geneura's infamy;
And, while I nothing of the cheat divine,
Beneath my bower renews the wonted sign:

"And I in costly robe, in which were set
Fair stripes of gold upon a snowy ground,
My tresses gathered in a golden net,
Shaded with tassels of vermilion round,
Mimicking fashions which were only met
In fair Geneura, at the accustomed sound
The gallery mount, constructed in such mode
As upon every side my person showed.

"This while Lurcanio, either with a view
To snares which might beset his brother's feet,
Or with the common passion to pursue
And play the spy on other, where the street

Was darkest and its deepest shadows threw,
Followed him softly to his dim retreat:
And not ten paces from the knight aloof,
Bestowed himself beneath the self-same roof.

"Suspecting nought, I seek the balcony,
In the same habits which I mentioned dressed;
As more than once or twice (still happily)
I did before; meanwhile the goodly vest
Was in the moonlight clearly seen, and I,
In aspect not unlike her, in the rest
Resembling much Geneura's shape and cheer,
One visage well another might appear;

"So much the more that there was ample space
Between the palace and the ruined row:
Hence the two brothers, posted in that place,
Were lightly cheated by the lying show.
Now put yourself in his unhappy case,
And figure what the wretched lover's woe,
When Polinesso climbed the stair, which I
Cast down to him, and scaled the gallery.

"Arrived, my arms about his neck I throw,
Weening that we unseen of others meet,

And kiss his lips and face with loving show,
As me I hitherto was wont to greet;
And he assayed, with more than wonted glow,
Me to caress, to mask his hollow cheat,
Led to the shameful spectacle, aghast,
That other, from afar, viewed all that passed,

"And fell into such fit of deep despair
He there resolved to die; and, to that end,
Planted the pommel of his falchion bare
I' the ground, its point against his breast to
bend.
Lurcanio, who with marvel by that stair
Saw Polinesso to my bower ascend,
But knew not who the wight, with ready speed
Sprang forward when he saw his brother's deed,

"And hindered him in that fell agony
From turning his own hand against his breast.
Had the good youth been later, or less nigh,
To his assistance he had vainly pressed.
Then, 'Wretched brother, what insanity,'
He cried, 'your better sense has dispossessed!
Die for a woman! rather let her kind
Be scattered like the mist before the wind!

"'Compass her death! 'tis well deserved; your own
Reserve, as due to more illustrious fate.
'Twas well to love, before her fraud was shown;
But she, once loved, now more deserves your hate,
Since, witnessed by your eyes, to you is known
A wanton of what sort you worshipped late.
Her fault before the Scottish king to attest,
Reserve those arms you turn against your breast.'

"Ariodantes, so surprised, forewent,
Joined by his brother, the design in show;
But resolute to die, in his intent
Was little shaken: rising thence to go,
He bears away a heart not simply rent,
But dead and withered with excess of woe:
Yet better comfort to Lurcanio feigns,
As if the rage were spent which fired his veins.

"The morn ensuing, without further say
To his good brother, or to man beside,
He from the city took his reckless way
With deadly desperation for his guide;
Nor, save the duke and knight, for many a day
Was there who knew what moved the youth to ride:

And in the palace, touching this event,
And in the realm, was various sentiment.

"But eight days past or more, to Scotland's court
A traveller came, and to Geneura he
Related tidings of disastrous sort:
That Ariodantes perished in the sea;
Drowned of his own free will was the report,
No wind to blame for the calamity!
Since from a rock, which over ocean hung,
Into the raging waves he headlong sprung;

"'Who said, before he reached that frowning crest,
To me, whom he encountered by the way,
"Come with me, that your tongue may manifest,
And what betides me to Geneura say;
And tell her, too, the occasion of the rest,
Which you shall witness without more delay.
In having seen too much, the occasion lies;
Happy had I been born without these eyes!"

"'By chance upon a promontory we
Were standing, over-right the Irish shore;
When, speaking thus on that high headland, he
Plunged from a rock amid the watery roar.

I saw him leap, and left him in the sea;
And hurrying thence, to you the tidings bore.'
Geneura stood amazed, her colour fled,
And, at the fearful tale, remained half dead.

"O God! what said, what did she, when alone
She on her faithful pillow laid her head!
She beat her bosom, and she tore her gown,
And in despite her golden tresses shed,
Repeating often, in bewildered tone,
The last sad words which Ariodantes said:—
That the sole source of such despair and such
Disaster was that he had seen too much.

Wide was the rumour scattered that the peer
Had slain himself for grief; nor was the cry
By courtly dame, or courtly cavalier,
Or by the monarch, heard with tearless eye.
But, above all the rest, his brother dear
Was whelmed with sorrow of so deep a dye
That, bent to follow him, he well-nigh turned
His hand against himself, like him he mourned.

"And many times repeating in his thought,
It was Geneura who his brother slew,

Who was to self-destruction moved by nought
But her ill-deed, which he was doomed to view;
So on his mind the thirst of vengeance wrought,
And so his grief his reason overthrew,
That he thought little, graced of each estate,
To encounter king and people's common hate;

"And, when the throng was fullest in the hall,
Stood up before the Scottish king and said,
'Of having marred my brother's wits withal,
Sir king, and him to his destruction led,
Your daughter only can I guilty call:
For in his inmost soul such sorrow bred
The having seen her little chastity,
He loathed existence, and preferred to die.

"'He was her lover; and for his intent,
Was honest, this I seek not, I, to veil;
And to deserve her by his valour meant
Of thee, if faithful service might avail;
But while he stood aloof, and dared but scent
The blossoms, he beheld another scale,
Scale the forbidden tree with happier boot,
And bear away from him the wished-for fruit.'

"Then added, how into the gallery came
Geneura, and how dropped the corded stair;
And how into the chamber of the dame
Had climbed a leman of that lady fair;
Who, for disguise (he knew not hence his name),
Had changed his habits and concealed his hair:
And, in conclusion, vowed that every word
So said he would avouch with lance and sword.

"You may divine how grieves the sire, distraught
With woe, when he the accusation hears:
As well that what he never could have thought,
He of his daughter learns with wondering ears,
As that he knows, if succour be not brought
By cavalier that in her cause appears,
Who may upon Lurcanio prove the lie,
He cannot choose but doom the maid to die.

"I do not think our Scottish law to you
Is yet unknown, which sentences to fire
The miserable dame or damsel who
Grants other than her wedded lord's desire.
She dies, unless a champion good and true
Arm on her side before a month expire;
And her against the accuser base maintain
Unmeriting such death, and free from stain.

"The king has made proclaim by town and tower
(For he believes her wronged, his child to free),
Her *he* shall have to wife, with ample dower,
Who saves the royal maid from infamy.
But each to the other looks, and to this hour
No champion yet, 'tis said, appears: for he,
Lurcanio, is esteemed so fierce in fight,
It seems as he were feared of every knight.

"And evil fate has willed her brother dear,
Zerbino, is not here the foe to face;
Since many months has roved the cavalier,
Proving his matchless worth with spear and mace;
For if the valiant champion were more near
(Such is his courage), or in any place
Whither in time the news might be conveyed,
He would not fail to bear his sister aid.

"The king meantime, who would the quest pursue,
And by more certain proof than combat try
If the accuser's tale be false or true,
And she deserve, or merit not, to die,
Arrests some ladies of her retinue,
That, as he weens, the fact can verify;

Whence I foresaw, that if I taken were,
Too certain risk the duke and I must share.

"That very night I from the palace flee,
And to the duke repair, escaped from court;
And, were I taken, make him plainly see
How much it either's safety would import:
He praised, and bade me of good courage be,
And, for his comfort, prayed me to resort
To a strong castle which he held hard by;
And gave me two to bear me company.

"With what full proofs, sir stranger, you have heard,
I of my love assured the Scottish peer;
And clearly can discern, if so preferred,
That lord was justly bound to hold me dear.
Mark, in conclusion, what was my reward;
The glorious meed of my great merit hear!
And say if woman can expect to earn,
However well she love, her love's return.

"For this perfidious, foul, ungrateful man,
At length suspicious of my faith and zeal,
And apprehending that his wily plan
In course of time I haply might reveal,

Feigned that meanwhile the monarch's anger ran
Too high he would withdraw me, and conceal
Within a fortress of his own, where I
(Such was his real end) was doomed to die.

"For secretly the duke enjoined the guide,
Who with me through the gloomy forest went,
The worthy guerdon of a faith so tried,
To slay me; and had compassed his intent,
But for your ready succour when I cried.
Behold! what wagers love's poor slaves content."
Thus to Rinaldo did Dalinda say,
As they together still pursued their way.

Above all other fortune, to the knight
Was welcome to have found the gentle maid
Who the whole story of Geneura bright
And her unblemished innocence displayed;
And if he hoped, although accused with right,
To furnish the afflicted damsel aid,
Persuaded of the calumny's disproof,
He with more courage warred in her behoof.

And for St. Andrew's town, with eager speed.
Where was the king with all his family,

And where the single fight, in listed mead,
Upon his daughter's quarrel was to be,
The good Rinaldo pricked, nor spared his steed
Until, within an easy distance, he,
Now near the city, met a squire who brought
More recent tidings than the damsel taught :

That thither had repaired a stranger knight,
To combat in Geneura's quarrel bent,
With ensigns strange, not known of living wight,
Since ever close concealed the warrior went ;
Nor, since he had been there, had bared to sight
His visage, aye within his helmet pent :
And that the very squire who with him came
Swore that he knew not what the stranger's name.

Not far they ride before the walls appear,
And now before the gate their coursers stand.
To advance the sad Dalinda was in fear,
Yet followed, trusting in Rinaldo's brand.
The gate was shut, and to the porter near,
" What this implies," Rinaldo makes demand :
To him was said, the people one and all
Were trooped to see a fight without the wall,

Beyond the city, fought upon accord
Between Lurcanio and a stranger knight;
Where, on a spacious meadow's level sward,
The pair already had begun the fight.
The porter opened to Mount Alban's lord,
And straight behind the peer the portal hight
Rinaldo through the empty city rode,
But in a hostel first the dame bestowed:

And wills that she (he will not long delay
To seek her there) till his return repose;
And quickly to the lists pursued his way,
Where the two made that fell exchange of blows
And strove and struggled yet in bloody fray.
Lurcanio's heart with vengeful hatred glows
Against Geneura; while that other knight
As well maintains the quarrel for her right.

Six knights on foot within the palisade
Stand covered with the corslet's iron case;
Beneath the Duke of Albany arrayed,
Borne on a puissant steed of noble race:
Who there, as lord high-constable obeyed,
Was keeper of the field and of the place,
And joyed Geneura's peril to espy
With swelling bosom and exulting eye.

Rinaldo pierces through the parted swarm
(So wide is felt the good Bayardo's sway),
And he who hears the courser come in storm
Halts not in his desire to make him way:
Above is seen Rinaldo's lofty form,
The flower of those who mixed in martial fray.
He stops his horse before the monarch's chair,
While all to hear the paladin repair.

"Dread sir," to him the good Rinaldo said,
"Let not the pair this combat longer ply;
Since whichsoever of the two falls dead,
Know that you let him perish wrongfully:
This thinks that he is right, and is misled,
Vouches the false, and knows not 'tis a lie;
Since that which brought his brother to his end
Moves him in causeless battle to contend.

"*That*, in pure gentleness, with little care
If what he here maintains be wrong or right,
Because he would preserve a maid so fair,
Perils his person in the furious fight.
To injured innocence I safety bear,
And to the evil man its opposite.
But first, for love of God, the battle stay;
Then list, sir king, to what I shall display."

So moved the king the grave authority
Of one who seemed so worthy, by his cheer,
That he made sign the battle should not be
Further continued then with sword or spear:
To whom, together with his chivalry,
And barons of the realm and others near,
Rinaldo all the treacherous plot displayed,
Which Polinesso for Geneura laid.

Next that he there in arms would testify
The truth of what he vouched, the warrior cried.
False Polinesso called, with troubled eye
Stood forth, but daringly the tale denied.
To him the good Rinaldo in reply,
"By deeds be now the doubtful quarrel tried."
The field was cleared, and, ready armed, the foes,
Without more let, in deadly duel close.

How was the hope to king and people dear,
The proof might show Geneura innocent!
All trust that God will make the treason clear,
And show she was accused with foul intent:
For Polinesso, greedy and severe
And proud was held, and false and fraudulent.
So that none there, of all assembled, deemed
It marvel if the knight such fraud had schemed.

False Polinesso, with a mien distressed,
A pallid cheek, and heart which thickly beat,
At the third trumpet laid his lance in rest;
As well Rinaldo spurred the knight to meet,
And levelled at his evil foeman's breast,
Eager to finish at a single heat.
Nor counter to his wish was the event;
Since through the warrior half his weapon went.

Him, through his breast impaled upon the spear,
More than six yards beyond his horse he bore.
With speed alighted Mount Albano's peer,
And, ere he rose, unlaced the helm he wore:
But he for mercy prayed with humble cheer,
Unfit to strive in joust or warfare more:
And, before king and court, with faltering breath
Confessed the fraud which brought him to his death.

He brings not his confession to a close,
And pangs of death the failing accents drown:
The prince, who ended saw his daughter's woes,
Redeemed from death and scorn, her virtue shown,

With more delight and rapture overflows
Than if he, having lost his kingly crown,
Then saw it first upon his head replaced;
So that he good Rinaldo singly graced.

And when, through his uplifted casque displayed,
Features, well known before, the king deseried,
His thanks to God with lifted hands he paid,
That he had deigned such succour to provide.
That other cavalier who bared his blade,
Unknown of all, upon Geneura's side,
And thither came from far his aid to impart,
Looked upon all that passed, and stood apart.

Him the good king entreated to declare
His name, or, at the least, his visage show;
That he might grace him with such guerdon fair
As to his good intent was justly due.
The stranger, after long and earnest prayer,
Lifted the covering casque, and bared to view
What in the ensuing canto will appear,
If you are fain the history to hear.

Wretched that evil man who lives in trust
His secret sin is safe in his possession!
Since, if nought else, the air, the very dust
In which the crime is buried, makes confession;
And oftentimes his guilt compels the unjust,
Though sometime unarraigned in worldly session
To be his own accuser, and bewray,
So God has willed, deeds hidden from the day.

The unhappy Polinesso hopes had nursed,
Wholly his secret treason to conceal
By taking off Dalinda, who was versed
In this, and only could the fact reveal;
And adding thus a second to his first
Offence, but hurried on the dread appeal,
Which haply he had shunned, at least deferred;
But he to self-destruction blindly spurred,

And forfeited estate, and life, and love
Of friends at once, and honour, which was more.
The cavalier unknown, I said above,
Long of the king and court entreated sore,
At length the covering helmet did remove,
And showed a visage often seen before,
The cherished face of Ariodantes true,
Of late lamented weeping Scotland through;

Ariodantes, whom with tearful eye
His brother and Geneura wept as dead,
And king, and people, and nobility:
Such light his goodness and his valour shed.
The pilgrim therefore might appear to lie
In what he of the missing warrior said.
Yet was it true that from a headland he
Had seen him plunge into the foaming sea;

But, as it oft befalls despairing wight
Who grisly Death desires till he appear,
But loathes what he had sought on nearer sight
(So painful seems the cruel pass and drear);
Thus, in the sea engulphed, the wretched knight,
Repentant of his deed, was touched with fear;
And, matchless both for spirit and for hand,
Beat back the billows and returned to land.

And now despising, as of folly bred,
The fond desire which did to death impel,
Thence, soaked and dripping wet, his way did tread,
And halted at a hermit's humble cell:
And, housed within the holy father's shed,
There secretly awhile designed to dwell,
Till to his ears by rumour should be voiced
If his Geneura sorrowed or rejoiced.

At first he heard that, through excess of woe,
The miserable damsel well-nigh died:
For so abroad the doleful tidings go,
'Twas talked of in the island far and wide:
Far other proof than that deceitful show
Which, to his cruel grief, he thought he spied!
And next against the fair Geneura heard
Lurcanio to her sire his charge preferred:

Nor for his brother felt less enmity
Than was the love he lately bore the maid:
For he too foul and full of cruelty
Esteemed the deed, although for him essayed;
And hearing after, in her jeopardy,
That none appeared to lend the damsel aid,
Because so puissant was Lurcanio's might,
All dreaded an encounter with the knight;

And that who well the youthful champion knew,
Believed he was so wary and discreet
That, had what he related been untrue,
He never would have risked so rash a feat,—
For this the greater part the fight eschew,
Fearing in wrongful cause the knight to meet—
Ariodantes (long his doubts are weighed)
Will meet his brother in Geneura's aid.

"Alas! he said, "I cannot bear to see
Thus by my cause the royal damsel die;
My death too bitter and too dread would be
Did I, before my own, her death descry:
For still my lady, my divinity
She is—the light and comfort of my eye.
Her, right or wrong, I cannot choose but shield,
And for her safety perish in the field.

"I know I choose the wrong, and be it so!
And in the cause shall die: nor this would move,
But that, alas! my death, as well I know
Will such a lovely dame's destruction prove.
To death I with one only comfort go,
That, if her Polinesso bears her love,
To her will manifestly be displayed
That hitherto he moves not in her aid.

"And me, so wronged by her, the maid shall view
Encounter death in her defence; and he,
My brother, who such flames of discord blew,
Shall pay the debt of vengeance due to me.
For well I ween to make Lurcanio rue
(Informed of the event) his cruelty,

Who will have thought to venge me with his
brand,
And will have slain me with his very hand."

He, having this concluded in his thought,
Made new provision of arms, steed, and shield;
Black was the vest and buckler which he bought,
Where green and yellow striped the sable field:
By hazard found, with him a squire he brought,
A stranger in that country; and concealed
(As is already told) the unhappy knight
Against his brother came, prepared for fight.

The issue of the event was told above;
How prince and people Ariodantes knew.
Nor less delight the Scottish king did prove
Than when the knight the accuser overthrew:
Within himself he thought that never love
In man was shown so constant and so true;
Who, though so foully wronged, prepared to stake
His life against his brother's for her sake:

And yielding to his natural inclination,
And at the suit of all his court beside,
And mostly at Rinaldo's instigation,
Assigned the youth the damsel as his bride.

Albany's duchy, now in sequestration,
Late Polinesso's, who in duel died,
Could not be forfeited in happier hour,
Since this the monarch made his daughter's dower

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